

UNCLASSIFIED

E-581A

STATEMENT
OF
THE HONORABLE EDWARD DEEMINKSI
COUNSELOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1983

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IS/FPC/CDR

HH

10/13/93

☒ RELEASE () DECLASSIFY
☐ EXCISE () DECLASSIFY
☐ DENY IN PART
☐ DELETE Non-Responsive Info
FOIA Exemptions _____
PA Exemptions _____

MR Cases Only:
EO Citations _____

() CLASSIFY as () S or () CADR
() DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () CADR

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

UNCLASSIFIED

It is a pleasure to speak to you today about Raoul Wallenberg.

UNCLASSIFIED

As you know, when I was a member of the House, I took a very active interest in the fate of Raoul Wallenberg, and now as State Department Counselor, let me begin by stating that the Department of State and the President share with the Congress a strong concern about the fate of Raoul Wallenberg. We are taking every appropriate opportunity to make that concern known to the Soviet authorities and to make clear to them that the United States will be satisfied with nothing less than a full and complete accounting of the fate of Mr. Wallenberg.

As you know, in 1981 President Reagan signed a bill which made Raoul Wallenberg an honorary citizen of the United States. Although honorary citizenship established no rights in international law that would give us any greater legal standing in our inquiries with the Soviet Union, it was an important symbolic act. It let the entire world know how much we admire Raoul Wallenberg's courage, how much we are inspired by his dedication to humanity and humanitarian principles, and how much we deplore his unjust and illegal punishment by the Soviet Union.

Following the signing ceremony which made Raoul Wallenberg an honorary American, the Department of State made the Soviet Government formally and officially aware of our continued dedication to finding out the truth about Raoul Wallenberg's fate.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED -3-

Soviets both on a bilateral basis and at international fora, such as the CSCE Review Conference in Madrid and the U.N. Human Rights Commission. In this regard, last year our representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, Mr. Michael Novak, urged the Soviet Union to make "a humanitarian gesture, which would contribute to universal good-feeling, namely, a renewed search and full report, which may lay questions to rest; or else, in the best of all possible outcomes, result in the discovery of the whereabouts of a man who stands among the heroes of our time."

At this year's session of the Commission, on February 22, Alternate Representative Walter Berns again raised the issue of Raoul Wallenberg, whom he termed "one of the genuine heroes of World War II, and one of the war's most noble spirits." Mr. Berns suggested that the UN Human Rights Commission's working group on disappearances be authorized to "make a renewed search and a full report" on the case "involving the most famous of all disappeared persons."

We have also continued to work closely with the Government of Sweden to try to confirm reports that have come to light about Wallenberg. To date, we have been unable to confirm any of the reports suggesting that Wallenberg might still be alive. We intend to continue to cooperate fully with the Government of Sweden and all other interested parties in a persistent effort to obtain information that will clarify the fate of this brave man.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

To date, we have not received a satisfactory response from the Soviet Government to this or any of our earlier inquiries.

Immediately following the liberation of Budapest by Soviet troops in 1945, Raoul Wallenberg disappeared into Soviet custody. The Soviets have never accounted for their incarceration of Wallenberg, which was in total violation of Wallenberg's immunity as a Swedish diplomat under international law. Although there has been speculation that the Soviets suspected Wallenberg of being an espionage agent for the United States, there is not one shred of documentation to indicate Wallenberg was engaged in anything but a humanitarian effort.

The official Soviet explanations of what happened to Wallenberg have been inconsistent and incomplete. In 1947 the Soviets informed Sweden that Wallenberg died in Hungary in 1945. In 1957, after repeated Swedish inquiries, the Soviets stated that Wallenberg had, in fact, died in a Soviet prison in 1947. In 1980, the Soviets provided this same explanation to us.

Our position has remained consistent and clear. Until the Soviets provide a full clarification of Wallenberg's fate, the United States will not accept as final the Soviet assurances that Wallenberg died in 1947.

We have pressed our efforts to obtain an accounting from the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

-4-

As Ambassador Max Kampelman noted at a CSCE plenary session two years ago, the Wallenberg case is one that "will not go away"; the Soviet failure "to appreciate the human factor which is symbolized by the Wallenberg case" only serves to stimulate further interest.

Your colleague, Tom Lantos, has suggested the establishment of a Wallenberg freedom award which would be used to honor individuals who have advanced the cause of human rights. This certainly would be a dramatic and practical vehicle for emphasizing the worldwide concern about Raoul Wallenberg. However, since it is our fervent hope that Wallenberg is still alive, and the pressure we are exerting is such that he would eventually be released and returned to freedom, the only question we would have is that there not be any interpretation, which this award might arouse, that we are accepting the fact that he might be dead.

The United States Government will continue to express concern over the Wallenberg case at every appropriate opportunity, both publicly and in our diplomatic communications with the Soviet Union. I can assure you categorically that this matter will be raised again in every appropriate forum.

The tragedy of Raoul Wallenberg has attracted the attention of millions of people around the world, and nowhere more forcefully than in the United States. This hearing is an example of the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

-5-

special concern of the United States Congress and the American people, and we appreciate the opportunity it provides to keep this issue at the forefront of world attention.

UNCLASSIFIED